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THE  
INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

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BY

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AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON,

GENTLEMEN,

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IN consequence of the lamented ill-health of your excellent instructor, and my estimable friend, Mr. Youatt, you behold me before you this evening as his willing, but, I fear (as the sequel may prove), his imperfect representative. Hardly a month ago I had no more idea of being called to such an honour, than any one who now hears me may have entertained. But the Council of this Institution having expressed their unwillingness that these Lectures should be discontinued, even for a single course, and suggested to the Lecturer the expediency of his providing himself, during his indisposition, with a substitute, Mr. Youatt has been induced (I presume in the spirit of friendship) to call on me. And since, gentlemen, I have answered that call, all I can say is, that I must do my best in the execution of the trust which my friend has done me the honour to repose in me; at least, to the extent that my own health, which has for some considerable time past been but indifferent, will permit me to exert myself.

VETERINARY SCIENCE, gentlemen, may be taken in its fullest sense to mean *medical zoology*. Though, for many reasons, we have selected the HORSE as the *principal* object of study; yet is there no animal—no quadruped, at least—that can be said to stand without the pale of its investigations. Such as are called *domestic animals*, it is true, form the ordinary subjects of our care: this, however, arises simply from the circumstance of their coming so frequently under our notice, and not from any prescribed limits set to the science itself.

The pre-eminent station the horse occupies among other domestic quadrupeds, he owes to the variety of ways in which he contributes to our profits as well as to our pleasures, and to the

consequent pecuniary worth he has, and most deservedly, attained. While he tills our land, and has hitherto formed our almost only means of land-transport; he fights our battles; runs our races; transports us in the chase; and either carries us upon his back, or draws us about in our carriages, from place to place, at once with pleasure, speed, and safety. Such, gentlemen, being the leading qualifications of an animal which in this, beyond all other countries in the world, has flourished and improved, and grown to a value almost incredible, it may not be either uninteresting or out of place cursorily to inquire how, or by what means, he has been brought to such great perfection amongst us, above all other nations.

That Britain owes little or nothing for its present horses to any indigenous breed it might have possessed, seems pretty certain, not only from the silence of our historians on that subject in particular, but from the circumstance of the many recorded importations of horses, and excellent ones of their kind, our country has had, at sundry times, from various parts of the continent; and from countries which at those times as much surpassed us in this particular as we of the present age do any and all of them. The only original breed history warrants our laying any claim to, seems to be the Welch pony, or some such rude production—an animal, though very useful in its way, as far different from and inferior to the generality of our present stock as it is possible for two animals of the same class to be. Indeed, we have arrived at such perfection in our present native breeds, that not only do we surpass all other nations in each and every one of them respectively, but appear in most of them to have produced specimens which have really no fellows or likes in any part of the world. The English race-horse derives his blood or characteristic breeding from the Arabian; and yet so improved an animal is he become, that, while he retains almost all the corporeal beauty of his progenitor, he outshines him in every qualification that can render him, as a racer, valuable or useful. As for the English cart-horse, it appears probable that he is, or rather originally was, an importation from Normandy or Flanders; but so far have we transcended our neighbours, even in the cart and carriage breeds, that the state coach of their own sovereign (the King of the French) is now drawn by English horses.

The bare mention of this universally acknowledged superiority in our horses, naturally creates in the mind a desire to learn by what means, or in what way, it has been acquired. That we are not indebted to our own original country or indigenous stock for it, appears pretty evident not only from the accounts we have of them, but from the comparatively recent date of some of our

present most valued breeds. Nor can we be said to be altogether indebted to other countries for it; since we are, at present, in possession of a race of horses no where to be met with but in Great Britain. We first derived the parent stem from abroad, it is true; but we have so improved the fruit—the produce thereof—that, not only are the parental characters in a great measure unredeemable, but the virtues or qualities of the progenitor are surpassed beyond all calculation in the offspring. This is an acknowledged truth; and a truth of that description that richly deserves investigation. It therefore becomes a question, and a very interesting one, to what our present justly vaunted breed of horses is owing?—since we do not deign to acknowledge either continental importation or original native production as the sole or even the most influential causes of these phenomena.

There are three circumstances in particular by which the kinds or characters of animals, passing from one generation to another, appear to be influenced;—*climate*, *soil*, and *breed*: let us, in the most cursory manner, inquire how far each of them seems to have been operative in the production of the British horse.

That *climate* of itself has worked such wonders, no one, I imagine, would for a moment believe; and especially when he becomes informed that the best horses out of our country, Arabians, Barbs, &c., are found in climates much hotter than our own, whose variable temperature, and sudden and constant vicissitude of weather, one would surely think, must be any thing but conducive to birth and beauty in the animal form. Is not France a much more even and congenial climate than England? one that brings forth all sorts of vegetable productions, in the natural world, to much greater perfection than ours does? And yet, its animals—its horses, bear no sort of comparison with ours. How is this? Surely, we cannot ascribe our superiority to *climate*!

Is it, then, the *soil*? That soil must have considerable influence, there cannot be a doubt. On the nature of the soil depends the quality of the pasture; and on the quality of the pasture will depend its property of nourishing and invigorating the animal body. The science of agriculture has enriched Britain with her choicest fruits: the feed of horses and of cattle has been brought to the very highest state of perfection, and even contending against more or less ungenial influence of climate. This is a fact that cannot be denied; and it is one of very great weight with us on the present occasion.

How far soil, considered without any reference to climate, will serve to account for the provincial characteristics of our horses

and cattle, I will not pretend to say : certain it is, that one county produces one description of horse, while another county or district brings forth something possessing differences, which, though not general or important, are sufficient to enable us to say in most cases where each animal has been bred and brought up.

The grand first cause, however, in all these changes—that by the steady prosecution and scientific management of which, they have been with such success brought about—appears to me to be *breeding* ; by which I do not only mean the procuration of original stock of good description, but the continual progressive cultivation of that stock in the progeny, by the greatest care in rearing and feeding it, and the nicest selection from amongst it of individuals best qualified for future procreation. I believe a great deal more depends upon this last circumstance than upon the original characters or attributes of the parents.

*Ab origine*, there could have been but one single breed or kind : climate and soil have, doubtlessly, had their influences in multiplying and varying the produce ; but I believe that we are, beyond every thing else, indebted to what I would call, *culture in breeding*. We have progressed from good to better—step by step, losing sight of no subsidiary help—until we have attained, as I said before, a perfection in horse-flesh unknown in the whole world besides.

A question which seems naturally to follow the one we have just been examining, is, What has led to all this pains-taking in Britain in regard to her breed of horses ? The natives must have had some constant stimulus to have kept so much on the alert on this domestic production in particular. Why, yes ! The stimulus has been the *high prices* horses have brought in the market, and especially those of blood and strength ; to attain which perfections, either separate or combined, according to the purpose for which the animal was designed, has ever been the consummation of the breeder. And what has led to such high prices for horses ? In particular, the national sports of *racing* and *hunting*, which have created a sort of native, indigenous pride in an Englishman, to be possessed of a good horse. The prices we of the present day are in the habit of paying for our horses, even in our own country where they are bred and brought up, are to a foreigner all but incredible : from one to five thousand pounds sterling are paid for a race-horse ; from one to five hundred for a hunter ; and as much as half these latter sums for good hackneys and carriage-horses. A standard of value, gentlemen, which we cannot regard but with the highest degree of inward satisfaction ; since, were once the prices of horses to grow low, one might reasonably quake for the practitioners of veterinary medicine. For,

after all that may be said on the score of humanity (and I trust that neither our employers nor ourselves are deficient in any such feeling), the *price* of horses it is that will do the most for the veterinary profession.

Having said thus much, gentlemen, on the chief object of veterinary science, the HORSE, I shall now enter on some observations touching the science itself. The study of veterinary science is of comparatively modern introduction into this country. But fifty years ago, the art was in the hands of a set of men who, from their want of education and the mechanical nature of their occupation, were unfitted for any thing that required science or art, save the handicraft which they practised at the anvil, of making horseshoes and nailing them upon the feet. Like the barber-surgeons of old, from the circumstance of their operative services being required, and so frequently in one way, on the body, they were called (there being either a total want or great paucity of medical practitioners) to exercise an art of which they possessed no other knowledge than such traditionary lore as might have been handed down to them by their forefathers. In such hands as these, it was not to be expected that our art could thrive—that it ever could sufficiently develope its utility and importance, to assert those claims on society in general which it has since manifested, and to which I trust every year we advance in the present age is adding some fresh ones.

Such was the barbarous or, at least, uncultivated state of the veterinary art at the time that St. Bel, a French gentleman from the veterinary school at Lyons, arrived in this country. He it was that prompted the first effort to redcem our art from the abyss of ignorance and superstition into which it had long and lowly fallen, and once more to raise it on those pedestals of science upon which it had already rested, during the ages of the Greeks and Romans. Such a strong hold, however, had these descendants of Vulcan got of the art, or, rather, so unknown and undervalued were the advantages it held out to produce in skilful or qualified hands, that when St. Bel first arrived in this country, in 1788, and made public proposals to teach an improved practice of it on the principles of science, his offers met with no encouragement, and he was compelled to retrace his steps to France. Undaunted, however, by this one unsuccessful attempt, he made another visit to England, two years afterwards; and this turned out a fortunate one. For, on this occasion, an agricultural society, the ODIHAM (a proof of their good sense and very much to their credit) gave ear to what Monsieur St. Bel had to propose; and finally resolved themselves into a body, called the Veterinary College of London, with a view to the erection of a

public school, over which St. Bel was to preside. That St. Bel was a man possessed of some considerable store of medical knowledge, I believe all who knew him will admit: at the same time, every one who stood beside him at the time he was at the College, and who themselves had any knowledge of veterinary matters, are agreed that, so far as a *veterinary* professor was wanted, he was not, to the degree that might have been expected or desired, qualified to undertake such an office. However, he held it but a very short time: hardly was the erection of the present college at St. Pancras (which was intended but as temporary and preliminary to something better) completed, when St. Bel died, leaving the art in but little better condition than that in which he had found it.

Among one of the first operations that was performed by St. Bel, at the College, was the excision of two redundant or accessory feet (in a case of *lusus naturæ*), which grew from the fetlocks of the two fore legs. He operated on one leg at a time. In the first operation, which he performed with considerable anxiety, from the apprehension of the superfluous growth communicating with the fetlock joint, he was assisted by the renowned John Hunter, who, on seeing him remove the part without providing any flap of integument to cover the wound afterwards, advised him, the next time he operated, to make a provision of the sort: the consequence of which friendly admonition was, that the parts healed in half the time after the second operation that they did after the first. That St. Bel, however, had he lived, would have placed the art upon a scientific basis, may be augured from a passage which I shall here read to you, out of a very commendable work he has left us, entitled, "Observations on the Art of Veterinary Medicine." The passage runs as follows:—"The object of this art is therefore not only congenial with that of human medicine, but the very same paths which lead to a knowledge of the diseases of man, lead equally to those of brutes. An accurate examination of the interior parts of their bodies; a studious survey of the arrangement, structure, form, connexion, use, and relation of these parts, and of the laws by which they are intended to act; as also of the nature and property of the various foods, and other agents, which the earth so liberally provides for their support and cure: these form, in a great measure, the sound and sure foundation of *all* medical science, whatever living individual animal is the subject of our consideration." This, gentlemen, is sound and wholesome doctrine, and such as could not have failed to have set our art upon a sure and firm basis: whatever, therefore, may be said of the deficiencies of St. Bel in practical matters, his name must ever stand

high in veterinary history, not only from the circumstance of his having been the *Founder of the Art* in this country, but from his having left behind him a series of observations (with a plan, grounded upon them, for the education of students) which, even at the present day, are perused with admiration.

The veterinary art, gentlemen, as a science or object of study, has two main supports:—on the one hand, it is supported by a knowledge of medicine; on the other, by a knowledge of that animal, in particular, on which medicine is to be practised.

A knowledge of *medicine*, in the fullest sense of the word, will not only comprise general anatomy, physiology, and pathology, but likewise chemistry and botany, and other useful collateral branches of science; while a knowledge of the animal himself will demonstrate the particular application of all this medical information, at the same time that it serves to distinguish medical practitioners of one denomination from those of another. What I mean by *general* anatomy, gentlemen, is, that sort of anatomical knowledge which applies to the *animal creation in general*, or, at least, to the more perfected departments or orders of it. A general knowledge of *bones*, and *joints*, and *muscles*, and *bloodvessels*, and *nerves*, will serve as well for a horse as for a man; and for a dog or a hog, as well as either. It is of little consequence which of these animals we take as our standard or model of perfection: each one, in its way, is as perfect as the other; and if one exhibit more complication in one respect than another, we shall find those that evince in some other particular still further complexity of structure. There will always, however, be this advantage attending an acquaintance with the anatomy and physiology of *many* animals; viz. that we shall find them reciprocally and beautifully illustrative one of another, and especially when we come to the study of *physiology*: a science which teaches us the uses and operations of parts of which anatomy has shewn us the composition and structure; and which consists of a set of laws or first principles equally as applicable to one animal as they are to another.

The third link in the chain of medical acquirements is *pathology*, or a knowledge of those changes the body sustains from disease; the general laws of which are likewise equally applicable to all animals, though, wherever structure and function vary, in course this must vary. That which is different in a state of health will be different in a state of disease. Thus far, then, will a knowledge of what I would call *general medicine* assist us. Let me now explain what is meant to be understood by a knowledge of the animal himself.

Having possessed ourselves of the rudiments—the first or

general principles of medicine (to which end all medical lectures and instruction, of whatever kind, will, one way or other, tend), our next duty is to select the animal that is to be the object of our study, in order that we may apply these principles to it. We must make ourselves acquainted with the peculiarities in its anatomy; with the peculiarities in its physiology; and with those of its pathology: at the same time we must inquire into its *natural history*; into its *habits*, natural and domestic; and into every *influential circumstance* under which we may be viewing it.

Now, gentlemen, with a view of shedding some additional light on what I have been laying down, as, in my opinion, the true groundwork of veterinary science, I shall bring before you (purely, as I said before, for the sake of elucidation) the often discussed cases of the surgeon and the farrier or groom as being respectively qualified for veterinary practice. From what I have just been saying, it will be evident enough to you, that both are, from certain important deficiencies, highly disqualified: let us, however, for the sake of comparison and elucidation, examine into their respective disqualifications. The surgeon walks into the domicile of the sick horse with all the self-confidence justly created in the mind by a conscious proficiency in medicine; and finding that the symptoms are such as to indicate considerable inflammatory action with disturbance of respiration, he orders that the animal be bled and purged and blistered: but judging from the seeming comparative powers of his own patient, he directs that five or six pounds of blood should be taken away; some sulphate of magnesia or soda in infusion of digitalis be given; and that some blister plaster be applied to the side. Now, the *principle* of this practice is, in itself, good: the error, all the way through, has lain in not being acquainted with the *peculiarities* of his new patient. Instead of drawing five or six pints, he should have abstracted ten or twelve; instead of giving purgative medicine (which to a horse with such a disorder is dangerous), he should have exhibited sedatives alone; and his blisters should have been many times stronger than such as he would find it necessary to employ in his own practice. All which has arisen simply from a want of knowledge of the peculiarities of the animal on which he was practising; a knowledge which to him is at all times of most easy attainment.

In the case of such a man as a groom or a farrier being called to attend a sick horse, well acquainted as he may be, and probably is, as to what the animal will bear in regard to bleeding and purging, and other ordinary operations, yet ignorant as he must be of any of the science of medicine itself, he cannot but run (even



supposing him to be a man versed in practice) continual danger of doing harm, and thus thwarting any good he may effect. However prosperously he may conduct all ordinary cases, yet the moment any thing turns up in practice out of the common course of events, will he be reduced to the dilemma of seeking advice elsewhere, or rather than do that, sacrifice the animal's life to his own ignorance and self-conceitedness.

From these observations, then, gentlemen, it appears that, in order to become good and efficient veterinarians, we must possess ourselves of much of the surgeon's knowledge, as well as of that of the farrier, the groom, and the horseman: in other words, we must make ourselves acquainted with the science of medicine, and upon that knowledge engraft all that relates to the animal on which it is our intencion to put it into practice. Our art is no more to be learned at the anvil than the practice of human surgery is to be learnt in a barber's shop. Its groundwork is set in science; and he who would practise it with any advantage to the public or credit to himself, must beforehand possess himself of that science.

In reference to medicine, gentlemen, you will have to make yourselves acquainted with the *anatomy* of the horse. You will have to dissect and examine every part of his body, in order that you may see for yourselves the different *materials* of which it is composed; how those materials are cemented together to form distinct parts or *textures*; how those textures are united to form parts still more complicated, which we call *organs*; and how all these textures and organs are connected together into one whole—one entire and perfect body. Your success, gentlemen, in this branch of your studies, will rather depend on a patient and zealous prosecution of them than on any mental exertion: though, I will take upon myself to say, that you will find anatomy, when properly conducted, by no means to be that *dry work* which it is too often represented to be. An animal body may be said to represent a machine of the most perfect and beautiful construction, with not only powers within itself of unremitting operation, but with the means of self-repair, should any part of the machinery get out of order. Every part and organ is so admirably contrived and adapted to its end, that it seems difficult to select any one in particular by way of illustration: there is, however, in the horse one structure more especially, which while it lays claims upon us in practice greater than any other, yet evinces beauties in its anatomy and physiology hardly to be surpassed throughout the animal creation. I allude to THE FOOT OF THE HORSE. To the mind of any ordinary observer, the hoof, perhaps, suggests nothing beyond a sort

of natural shoe or covering and defence for the sensitive parts of the foot; and in truth this is one intention of it. But the man who is unacquainted with its internal mechanism, supposes also (and naturally enough) that the sole of the foot, like the sole of his own boot or shoe, bears the weight of the animal. What will be his astonishment when I tell him that, instead of the burthen being received upon the sole, it is borne by what he might call the *upper-leather*—a part we have named the *wall* of the hoof, from the circumstance of its running round and inclosing all the other parts.

If we examine the interior of the wall, we shall find that it is *laminated*—that is, that it has attached to (or rather growing from) its surface 500 longitudinal plates of horn, and that these are for the purpose of receiving in the intervals between them 500 correspondent plates of organic or sensitive structure, and that in this manner the body of the animal is, as it were, slung or suspended from the walls of the four hoofs; and to prove that this is the case, the soles have been removed from the feet altogether—have been what is called *drawn*—and yet the sensitive foot has not come to the ground—not fallen through the hoof, but remained suspended within it: indeed, as far as the support of the weight was concerned, every thing remained just as secure as though the soles had not been removed. Here, gentlemen, is a simple fact—simple now, because it is known—but one, simple as it is, that a man might work all his lifetime in a blacksmith's shop without discovering; and be in the end in the situation of the tradesman turned gentleman, in Molière's play, who, on learning for the first time English grammar rather late in his days, found he had been speaking prose all his life without knowing it. The surgeon even, with all his medical knowledge, would be as little prepared to meet with this fact as the blacksmith, or any other person: he would naturally say, that he expected to find *laminae*, because such a structure exists in the human nail; but he would never have dreamt that such a function as the support of the animal was performed by them.

To proceed, gentlemen, one step further with this interesting part of our subject:—the beautiful structure we have just been examining not only supports the weight of the animal, but answers another purpose, scarcely less important; and one without which the former would not only prove of much less avail, but could not in safety go on at all. Not merely suspended is the weight, but the suspensory apparatus is itself *elastic*—yields and retracts—so that every time the horse, in going, puts his foot upon the ground, the suspending substance gives—elongates—and thereby breaks the force of the shock, warding off

concussion and all its injurious consequences. On the other hand, the instant the foot is raised off the ground again, the apparatus contracts, and thus becomes prepared for another descent: so that, in point of fact, a horse may be said to be moving in four *spring boxes*, or *foot-cases*, within which his feet are actually slung or suspended by their uppermost surfaces. Were this not the case, the foot bones—*coffin bones* as they are called—would be, from the great weight of the animal's body and the impetus created in action, literally smashed to pieces at every step.

These facts, gentlemen, will serve to convince you of the indispensableness of *anatomy*, and its concomitant *physiology*: by the one we discovered the existence, arrangement, and structure of the laminated apparatus we have been discoursing on; while the other has made us acquainted with the uses or functions that apparatus performs.

Before we quit the subjects of anatomy and physiology, let us take one other part by way of further illustration; at the same time that it becomes one more instance to shew how all-sufficient and admirable every structure we examine turns out to be. We will now take the EYE.—We will suppose that a bit of dirt, or a hay-seed, or some other extraneous matter, has flown into a horse's eye. How is the animal to get it out? He possesses no hands for the purpose; nor can his companions assist him in any way. What then is to be done? The dirt must not remain in the eye; if it does, inflammation will follow the pain and irritation it occasions, and the animal will lose his eye. What can he do? By his own *will*, nothing; or worse than nothing:—he may fruitlessly rub his eye against the manger, which in course would augment the evil.

All-provident Nature foresaw the inconvenience and annoyances that the animal must inevitably, in this respect, be subject to, and therefore had the precaution to furnish his eye with a contrivance no less beautiful than effectual. It consists, gentlemen, in what is called the *haw*—a substance often seen projecting from the inner corner of the eye. It is a part made of gristle; and so shaped as exactly to fit the front or sight of the eye, as completely, and much in the same manner, that one side of the outer case of a watch fits the inner. Now, whenever any extraneous matter gets into the eye, the first thing that happens is the closure of the lids, with instantaneous retraction of the eye; followed by a flow of tears, and the simultaneous protrusion of this gristly body over the forepart of the cornea: the effect of all which is to disengage the extraneous matter from the sight, and lodge it upon the exterior of the haw, from which it

is readily washed off by the tears, and thus discharged out of the eye altogether.

These curious facts and phenomena, gentlemen (to which might be added, taking the whole animal creation, others almost *ad infinitum*), are the results of investigations in anatomy and physiology: to every one they are interesting, even on the score of their philosophical beauty; to us they are not only equally interesting in that sense, but become "part and parcel" of our professional knowledge.

The ultimate object we have in view, in learning the anatomy and physiology of an animal, is, that we may be able to discover and understand the nature of its diseases; and with this knowledge devise such means as are best adapted for their cure. This comprehends the *pathology* of the animal. We find the structure of a part in a state of health together with the functions it performs to be of such a description; and whenever we behold any deviation from these, we say the part is in a state of disease. For example, we know that the eye should appear transparent: consequently, should it look muddy or opaque, we say it has become diseased. We know the pupil—what is commonly called, the *apple* of the eye—should have a French grey or whitish blue sort of aspect: should it appear otherwise, we suspect disease to be present. The signs and appearances of health are, in a measure, peculiar to every animal of its kind; so that we, who are in the habit of attending medically to one animal in particular, may often be deceived when we come to give our opinion of others. Generally speaking, when a surgeon comes to look at a horse's eye, even though in perfect health, he suspects the animal to have a *cataract*. This is an opinion that has more than once been expressed by some of the most celebrated oculists of this town; arising from the circumstance of the pupil of the horse's eye having a white or hazy sort of blueness which does not exist in the human eye. This shews, gentlemen, how dangerous it is to draw comparisons between one animal and another. For, notwithstanding that one set of *general* principles must direct us all, we shall find their application different in each individual species. What do you think, gentlemen, of a surgeon writing a work—and really, in every respect but one, a very clever work—and giving an account of the "diseases of the *gall-bladder* of the horse;" when, unfortunately for all his literary labour, at least in *that* department, the animal never had such a thing as a gall-bladder!

Everybody has heard of a *corn* in a horse's foot; as different a thing, gentlemen, from corns in our feet as light is from darkness. It is, however, a very simple disease; though, simple

as it is, it compels us to seek assistance, both from anatomy and physiology, before we can understand its nature. The *sole* of the horse's foot (though, as I told you before, it does not bear the weight) sinks down or descends, in consequence of the elongation of the elastic apparatus (which I also spoke of before); consequently, whenever any thing is opposed to the horny sole that prevents this descent of it, the sensitive sole becomes bruised, much in the same manner as one of our nails would if struck with a hammer. The consequence of this injury is, that blood is extravasated underneath the horny sole, and soaks through into the pores of it, staining it of that red hue which every common groom or blacksmith knows indicates the *existence* of corn; though they are, in course, totally unable to *account* for it.

With a view, however, to the detection and thorough understanding of disease, we must extend our knowledge farther than comes within the immediate precincts of medicine. We must make ourselves well acquainted with the natural and domestic habits of the animal; with his external conformation; with his action; with his powers, &c.:—knowledge such as this will enable us to detect disease in its earliest and most obscure forms, and to make those nice pathological distinctions which are so necessary to a scientific and efficacious practice.

There is a branch, gentlemen, of the veterinary art, which, as far as practice or even profit is concerned, is, perhaps, so little eligible, as to be rather rejected than desired; and yet is one so intimately connected with the welfare of the foot in health, and the production and removal of disease in it, as to be a link quite inseparable from the veterinarian's chain. However simple the art of shoeing horses, as commonly practised, may appear to be, and however mechanical it, in a great measure, in fact is, still, gentlemen, the paring of the hoof, and the adaptation and nailing of the proper sort of shoe, are operations that can only (in many cases even in health, and in all in disease) go properly on under the immediate eye of a veterinary surgeon. The foot is an organ doubly important to us: important to us, from being the instrument of support and progression; and important to us, from being so liable to disorder, in consequence of the defence it requires at the hands of art. It was a common saying with the farriers of old—"no foot, no horse;" and one of our medical examiners, in the course of a speech he made at one of the veterinary anniversary dinners, took occasion to laud us and our art so far, as to tell us we were the means of gaining the battle of Waterloo; which he explained as follows:—"The British cavalry," said he, "everybody knows, achieved wonders; and

had it not been that the feet of the horses were well shod, and free from disease, how could they have acted as they did?"

Though, in the cure of disease, we possess some advantages over surgeons, there is a disadvantage in comparison with them, and a heavy one it is, under which we labour in veterinary practice. If a surgeon attends a man for a bad compound fracture, and he recovers the limb sufficiently to enable his patient to walk about with a crutch, under all the circumstances of the case he obtains, and deservedly, great commendation: but if a veterinary surgeon, in a case of lameness (no matter from what cause, or how grievous a one), cannot restore his patient to *soundness*, he does little or nothing: not only not daring to ask for any praise, although probably he may richly deserve much; but more likely incurring the censure of his employer because he has not done, what?—why, worked impossibilities! A man makes a very useful member of society with a wooden leg. But who would keep a horse with a wooden leg? I know a cavalry officer of the British army who lost a limb, high up in the thigh, in the Peninsula, and who fought his way afterwards at Waterloo with a cork leg! But how would he have fought if his horse, as well as himself, had had a cork leg?

Again, gentlemen, supposing a man to have a disease in his eye—a *cataract* we will say; a disease for which the surgeon possesses no medicinal remedy, no more than ourselves. He is compelled to remove the lens (the diseased part) by operation, after which, though his patient is blind without optical aid, he enables him, by the use of spectacles, to recover very servicable vision. But who would like to trust to a *horse* in spectacles? Though the operation were practicable (which, by-the-by, it can hardly be said to be), yet would there be required such nicety in the adaptation of particular glasses to the sight, as well as in keeping them on, and clean and bright, that all this would prove an effectual barrier to their employment. Added to which, even suppose they *could* be worn with any effect, many horses would shy so with them, that they would prove far safer animals for use in a state of total blindness, than with such imperfect or dubious vision.

Although, gentlemen, the preceding observations have been made chiefly in reference to the horse, yet I should not be doing my duty in this chair, were I not to impress upon your minds the almost equal claims other domestic, and, indeed, *all* animals have upon us. The faithful dog, who, on all occasions, attaches himself to his master, no less by his sagacity and fidelity than by his truly valuable qualifications; the patient sheep, doomed to die to supply us with food and clothing; the ox, equally

serviceable, alive or dead; nay, even the swine itself, must not be disregarded. All, gentlemen, have claims upon us; and though the horse, from his being an especial favourite with his lord and master, and in particular from his comparatively great individual worth, demands our chief consideration, yet are the others, taken in the aggregate, a mass of national wealth which will well repay any pains we may take to include them in our investigations.

A great deal, gentlemen, has been said on the score of *importance* or *respectability* of the veterinary profession. Its utility however has, of late years, been so generally felt and acknowledged, that one would think the importance of the *art* could no longer be doubted; and as for the respectability and importance of its practitioners, that must at all times, and in all situations, more depend upon themselves than upon their calling. Considering the few years that have passed over our heads since we all wore leather aprons; and considering the great opposition the profession has met with from those who continue to wear leather aprons, and from some (to their discredit) who wear the garbs of men of science and gentlemen; and considering the many other disadvantages under which the art—rising once again like the phoenix from its ashes—has had to struggle with, I think we cannot feel altogether so dissatisfied with the places we at present occupy among professions and callings in general. In the army, the profession has for many years been placed upon the most respectable footing: the veterinary surgeon now holds a king's commission, which itself entitles the holder to every privilege enjoyed by an "officer and gentleman;" and it is his own fault if he does not avail himself to the full of such an honourable endowment. In the French army this is not the case: in their service, veterinary surgeons rank but with quarter-masters, who, themselves, are not commissioned: the consequence is, that they are excluded both from the officers' mess-table and from their association. Were this the case in our army, the service would never have reaped those benefits from veterinary science which, gentlemen, I dare affirm army characters will be found on all occasions most ready to acknowledge.

At one time, glanders, farcy, grease, canker, &c. so infested our cavalry horses, that, year after year, numbers of them were lost to the country: now-a-days, however, some of these diseases are unknown,—never seen in regiments; while others make their appearance so rarely, as to give us hopes that, in the course of time, they may disappear likewise.

The strongest opposition the profession has met with (and one the current of which runs still forcibly against us), is the *turf*—

as the racing people, collectively, are denominated. So obstinate and bigotted were these people, that, some years ago, they would let neither a veterinary surgeon nor a puff of pure air into their stables. Affairs, however, are taking a turn even with them. They are beginning to discover that racers do better breathing pure than foul air; and will, sooner or later, find out that we know more about diseases and lamenesses than they do themselves.

I cannot, gentlemen, let slip this opportunity of proclaiming, with a degree of exultation, that the Institution in which we are now seated has set an example to all other British Universities, in being the first to introduce veterinary lectures within their walls; a boon that will not fail to be recorded by the profession, and one which (I think I feel myself warranted in adding), considering into whose hands those lectures have fallen, the Council have had no room to regret. When the connexion of veterinary science with general medicine—with the pleasures and habits and pursuits of the superior classes of society—with the interests of agriculture, and even the well-being of our country—come to be better understood than they are at present;—when the veterinary art shall be taught and cultivated with advantages equivalent to those under which medicine has so rapidly progressed, and more encouragement shall be given to its improvement; then, but not till then, will those who practise it, assert claims on society, and assume an importance, superior to any hitherto known to the profession. The University of London has taken a step towards such desired amelioration: let us hope that other institutions will follow its patriotic and praiseworthy example.